



SOUTHWEST COLORADO MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

COMMUNITY UPDATE

Durango Counseling Center
281 Sawyer Drive, Suite 100
P.O. Box 1328
Durango, CO 81302
Phone: 970-259-2162
Fax: 970-247-5255

Cortez Counseling Center
215 West Arbecam
Cortez, CO 81321
Phone: 970-565-7946
Fax: 970-565-9005

Pagosa Springs Counseling Center
475 Lewis St., Suite 104
Pagosa Springs, CO 81147
Phone: 970-264-2104
Fax: 970-264-2108

CRISIS HOTLINES
Durango/Pagosa Springs:
970-247-5245
(Pagosa Springs 970-264-2104
during business hours)

Cortez: 970-565-7946

Volume 6, Issue 1

Newsletter Date: January 2010

Note From Bern

It has been a year since the last *Community Update*. I waited to issue this newsletter as I wanted to be able to share the news about our plans and efforts to transform from a traditional community mental health center to an integrated healthcare system. Those particularly interested in this transformation will want to read the feature article and news in Montezuma County on page 4. The transformation will include a shift in our name to **Axis Health System**. Initially you will see us referred to as both Southwest Colorado Mental Health Center and Axis Health System, but eventually we will operate entirely under Axis Health System.

Also contained in this newsletter is an update on our new electronic health record, our plans to share essential data with other community providers through a Regional Health Information Organization (RHIO), *Mental Health First Aid* which is an exciting new training we are providing free in the communities we serve, and our new phone system and its implications for you.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter and find it useful. Feedback is most welcome. Please contact Jill Quam (jquam@swcmhc.org) or me (bheath@swcmhc.org) with any suggestions or to unsubscribe. Credit for the much improved appearance of the newsletter goes to Jill.

Feature Article: TRANSFORMATION TO INTEGRATED HEALTHCARE

Healthcare reform is center stage at the Federal, State and local levels. Here in southwest Colorado we have an opportunity to shape its outcome. Healthcare reform must be more than expanding Medicaid and CHP+ eligibility, more than adding covered services, and more than improving access through universal coverage. Healthcare reform must be all of these things, **but it also needs to reform our concept of health and healthcare to a model that integrates physical health, mental health, substance use, and public health** (wellness, prevention and healthy lifestyles) approaches. We must treat the whole person.

The separation of mind and body, of physical health and mental health is neither helpful nor appropriate. Research does not support the separation, and David Stacher, MD, Ph.D., past Surgeon General of the United States, has said, "*Mental health is fundamental to overall health and well being...mental disorders are physical disorders and are real.*" Consider that:

- Over 60% of mental health services nationwide are provided in a primary care setting;
- Just under half of the persons presenting with a physical health complaint in a primary care setting have a co-occurring mental health or substance abuse issue;
- Depression is associated with risk-taking behaviors such as smoking, substance use, unsafe sex, and not following medical regimens;
- Due to stigma and limited access to services, the average length of time it takes to seek treatment for a major mental illness is just under 10 years; and
- Persons with a serious mental illness are dying 25 years younger than the general population.

The solution to the limits of our current healthcare system is integrated healthcare. Integration builds on the models of collaboration, consultation and co-location of services and moves beyond it. An integrated healthcare model uses the structure and pace of the primary care/specialty care model and transforms it by infusing mental health, substance abuse and public health approaches. With this in mind, our Center is creating a new integrated, collaborative healthcare model. More concretely, our model transforms or enriches both primary care and behavioral health through enhanced assessment, treatment and follow up:

Inside this issue:

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Notes From Bern | 1 |
| Transformation | 1 |
| Archuleta County | 2 |
| Dolores County | 3 |
| La Plata/San Juan Counties | 3 |
| Montezuma County | 4 |
| Center-Wide | 4 |
| A Sad Goodbye | 5 |

Transformation continued...

1. **Assessment.** It broadens the initial assessment of patient need by looking beyond allergies and medical conditions to include life style issues, substance use, depression and anxiety - an assessment addressing the whole person;
2. **Treatment.** For patients with co-occurring physical and mental health and/or substance use, treatment is provided by a care team to address the full scope of needs and the interactions between them; and
3. **Follow-up** services move beyond recommendations to warm handoffs to smoking cessation programs, weight loss alternatives, self-help groups and specialty services.

Together – Center and community – we can transform healthcare for the benefit of everyone who lives in southwest Colorado. Meanwhile, we can become a role model for healthcare reform across Colorado and across the nation.

Supporting this expanded healthcare concept are the services that our communities recognize and have come to rely upon: Emergency psychiatric services, the Detox serving La Plata County and Colorado's first licensed Acute Treatment Unit – the inpatient, psychiatric residential resource – serving all five counties.

Our Board and staff are committed to this transformation in the hope and belief that creating effective local solutions is the best way to impact State and national policy while at the same time serving the communities of southwest Colorado. Over the coming years our mental health and substance abuse services will be integrated with primary and public health (wellness, prevention and healthy lifestyles) approaches and delivered across our region in integrated care settings. The Center will become a transformed provider of integrated services treating the whole person under a new name: **Axis Health System**. At the same time we will be actively working with all existing primary care and specialty practices that are interested in increasing the integration of their practices.

For more information on this article or the Center's plans please contact Bern Heath, Ph.D., CEO at

Guess What? In April of 2010, Southwest Colorado Mental Health Center will celebrate 50 years of service to our southwest Colorado communities. Look for an announcement of our plans for a major 50 year celebration!



Archuleta County & Communities

Staff News:

At our Pagosa Springs office in September, **Linda Stanger** joined the school system and was replaced by **Eric Foss**, LPC.

Facts & Figures:

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009, 628 Archuleta County residents (unduplicated count) were provided with 4,207 hours of service through the Center. We provided 83 emergency assessments with 17 resulting in ATU stays (averaging just over 5 days per stay). Archuleta ATU admissions accounted for 8.4% of all ATU admits.

Program/Service News:

In March we developed a new protocol for Emergency Services in Pagosa as we did not have a contract with the hospital for on-site evaluations. Pagosa staff provided a community presentation entitled: *Stress Management in a Stressful Economy* in April. Several staff also contributed to a news article in the Pagosa Sun which ran on April 2. In September we provided 3 trainings on Mental Health First Aid for Pagosa Mountain Hospital staff. This was very well received. We are now in the process of developing Integrated Dual Diagnosis Treatment (IDDT) and other substance abuse treatment in Pagosa—the first major addition of substance abuse services in Archuleta County.

Pagosa Mountain Hospital: We are continuing to work with the Hospital and the community to develop a response to psychiatric emergencies that present at the hospital. There are some grant opportunities as well that we will be looking into with the Hospital including joining them in their planned Wellness Center.

Dolores County & Communities

Facts & Figures:

In fiscal year 2009, 16 Dolores County residents received emergency assessment services through the Center, with 3 resulting in ATU stays (averaging 8 days per stay).

Program/Service News:

The Dove Creek Community Health Clinic requested our participation to incorporate mental health and substance abuse services into the Clinic's service structure. Co-located and shared services began in April 2009 and have been tremendously well received by both patients and staff. **Anne Marie Cox, LCSW** is the 20 hour per week Behavioral Health Consultant (BHC) and **Lori Raney, MD** provides the psychiatric consultation. We have created coordinated access to the medical record, instituted mental health and substance abuse screening, and provide depression care management, joint care with the medical provider, and warm handoffs to the BHC for brief intervention. Dr. Raney has presented to the medical staff on psychotropic medications, depression management, chronic pain intervention and the treatment of anxiety.

La Plata/San Juan Counties & Communities

Staff News:

In February **Steven Kitson MD**, psychiatrist was promoted to Assistant Medical Director. In April **Scott Wallace, MA** filled a new position as Senior VP in charge of our Integrated Care Implementation. The majority of his time to start with will be spent in Cortez overseeing the construction and operation of our new facility.

In May **Dori Walden, MA** began coordinating DBT services across all service areas. In June **Stacey Foss, LAC**, was promoted to Director of Substance Abuse and **Susan Watson, APN**, joined our medical team. Susan provides services to both La Plata and Montezuma Counties. In July **Linda Miller, RN** joined our ATU nursing staff while **Megan Flanagan** and **Shannon Ferrari** joined the Case Management staff. Megan and Shannon replaced case managers **Jill Burke** and **Cindy Stangby** both of whom entered nursing school after having been with the Center for more than 10 years. Also in July **Audra Hatcher** became our New Day Receptionist when **Lindsay Railsback** left to attend radiology school.

In August my Executive Assistant, **Karen Spungen**, moved to PA as her husband Al had a career change. She was replaced by **Jill Quam**. Also in August **Gay Newman, LPC**, replaced **Brandon Meyers** as Clinical Assistant when Brandon left to pursue his phar-

macy career. In December **Julie Harris, MA** left the Regional Youth position due to relocation to Georgia and we are very close to filling the position.

Facts & Figures:

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009, 2,197 La Plata County residents (unduplicated count) were provided with 27,202 hours of service through the Center. We provided 693 emergency assessments with 115 resulting in ATU stays (averaging 6.7 days per stay). La Plata County ATU admissions accounted for 56.9% of all ATU admits.

Program/Service News:

School District 9-R. At the Durango High School we continue to be an integral part of the School Based Health Center and to integrate mental health and substance use service into the health service structure. Services are continuing this year at the High School and will be expanding to Florida Mesa Elementary School as funding and facility renovations allow. District 9-R has recently requested that we serve as the Medical Sponsor for School Based Health district-wide while the district itself will be the lead sponsoring agency. **Pam Wise Romero, Ph.D.** has served on the State Standards Work Group that is establishing standards for defining and operating a School Based Health Center.

Consumer & Family Affairs. In March the Durango Empowerment

Center, a recovery based and consumer led resource, moved to St. Marks Church. The move has worked well and the Empowerment Center continues to build an impressive array of activities and support systems. With impeccable timing, the Empowerment Center hosted a *Walk for Recovery* in May on the one day that it rained cats and dogs. Despite the rain that walk was a success and spirits were high.

Criminal Justice. The Center has been a member and active participant in the La Plata County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council since its inception almost 10 years ago. Together we have developed the Day Reporting Program for multiple DUI offenders, expanded services to the Jail and courts, and held a Regional Methamphetamine Conference to raise awareness and coordinate prevention efforts. Most recently, **Linda Lute, LAC, MAC** is chairing a committee to explore the idea of a behavioral health justice coordinator within the 6th Judicial District to better bridge the gaps in the justice system and engage those in need of treatment.

Substance Abuse. In October our Detox staff operated a booth at Fort Lewis college to provide information on the Detox facility and to promote substance abuse prevention in general. This was the first time we had partnered with Fort Lewis College in this way and it was very well received by the students.

Montezuma County & Communities

Staff News:

In July **Anne Marie Cox, LCSW** became our Behavioral Health Consultant serving both the Dove Creek Clinic and our Cortez facility.

Facts & Figures:

Program Services: For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009, 1,038 Montezuma County residents (unduplicated count) were provided with 9,648 hours of service through the Center. In Montezuma County we provided 223 emergency assessments with 44 resulting in ATU stays (averaging just under 6 days per stay). Montezuma ATU admissions accounted for 21.8% of all ATU admits.

Program/Service News:

New Cortez Facility/Operation. As referenced in the Feature Article, the biggest news at the Center is the commitment of the Board to transform our Center from a traditional community mental health center to a fully integrated health system. This is more than adding a program, it is changing how mental health services get delivered. In the future, for all the reasons we have talked about, mental health and substance abuse will be best and most effectively delivered in a new integrated care environment. We have worked with Mercy Medical Center in the Health Services Clinic, at the Durango High School Based Health Center, at the Dove Creek Health Center and with Southwest Memorial at their Primary Care Clinic to bring mental health, substance abuse and public health services into their clinic settings. These collaborations have provided much improved care yet there is the opportunity for fuller integration and even better care as the Center establishes fully integrated sites across our five county region—the very first of which will be **Axis Health System—Cortez**.



On January 6, 2010 we took a major step forward when we completed purchase of a 4-acre parcel at 635 East Empire St., in Cortez. We are poised to secure architectural services and begin construction with completion of the new facility in 12 to 18 months. This facility will replace our Arbecam facility and will be the first fully integrated health care facility of its kind in Colorado. This clinic will combine traditional primary care, mental health, substance use and certain public health services in one healthcare system.

Collaboration with SW Memorial Hospital. In addition to Axis Health System—Cortez, we will continue to work closely with Southwest Memorial Hospital as part of their Primary Care Clinic. **Tom Seymour, Ph.D.** is the behavioral health consultant for this facility delivering mental health and substance abuse services as part of this clinic's service array. We are also working with Southwest Memorial and with local primary care practices around a mechanism to share essential medical information between providers. In this regard we are looking at securing the services of Quality Health Networks, a Regional Health Information Organization (RHIO) to serve as the health information exchange resource.

Mancos Clinic. We have been approached by the Mancos Clinic operated by Valley-Wide Health System to collaborate more closely in their Mancos Clinic. Stay tuned.

Consumer & Family Affairs. The Cortez Kiva held a community open house on May 30 and held a walk for recovery at the same time. There was a very good turnout and funds were raised for this recovery-based, consumer led community resource.

Center-wide News

Program/Service News:

Integrated Care. **Stephanie Allred, Ph.D.** and **Pam Wise Romero, Ph.D.** have completed the "Behavioral Health in Primary Care" Program with the University of Massachusetts and received a certificate for completion of the 6 month training.

In mid-April we began asking each of our clients if they were willing to have us coordinate care with their primary care physician. With consent, we now send an information letter with basic treatment information, inviting the physician to coordinate the client's care with the Center.

Program/Service News cont...

Mental Health First Aid. Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is a 12 hour course teaching the skills for providing initial help to a person experiencing problems such as depression, anxiety disorders, psychosis, and substance use disorders. The course gives everyone the skills to help a person developing a behavioral health problem or in a behavioral health crisis; and, Southwest CO Mental Health Center has brought this valuable course to the Four Corners area.

“Just as giving CPR can save lives in medical emergencies, giving mental health first aid can do the same in a mental health or substance use crisis”, says program Coordinator **Mark White**. White goes on to say “Teaching practical, research supported methods of intervention, and empowering individuals to use them, are key parts of this program.” Participants receive a certificate at the completion of the course, and response has been positive regarding the knowledge and skills acquired. “This course was a great first exposure to mental health issues, and greatly reduces stigma”, reports one participant. Another says, “The course gave tools for use with a wide variety of people in a variety of situations. It encouraged compassion”.

MHFA instructors have already certified 146 people, including health care professionals, law enforcement officers, shelter volunteers, social services staff, community members, and school personnel at trainings held in Cortez, Pagosa Springs, Durango and Farmington, New Mexico.

For more information on this article or the Center’s plans please contact Mark White at 335-2217 or mwhite@swcmhc.org.

Administrative News:

Electronic Medical Record (EMR): SWCMHC, in conjunction with Midwestern Mental Health Center, Inc. (MWMHC) and Colorado West Regional Mental Health Center, Inc. (CWRMHC) has purchased and will jointly implement a new electronic medical record. The benefits of such a partnership include better pricing, standardizing practice and reporting, and creating the opportunity to support emergency services in each of the Centers. The product selected was Qualifacts’ CareLogic Electronic Medical Record (EMR). The CareLogic product is a comprehensive, enterprise, web-based system covering: front desk scheduling, outpatient clinical record keeping, residential record keeping and billing and data reporting functionality. As with our current EMR, the new EMR is accessible by our staff wherever they are, with portable equipment and the appropriate security. This “system portability” has proved invaluable to SWCMHC staff and improved the quality and accuracy of our records since the initial EMR was implemented in 2003. We plan to “Go Live” with this new implementation in the Spring of 2010.

One of the product enhancements that we are developing with this new EMR is an interface with **Quality Health Networks (QHN)**, a regional health information exchange technology platform. QHN is the West Slope leader in facilitating the collection and sharing of client health information in a single data platform among the participating providers in their network. QHN has received national recognition for its innovation and effectiveness and will allow for sharing of critical health information between systems of care for better, more effective and coordinated healthcare. This will be done with an absolute commitment to adequate protections to ensure confidentiality.

Medicaid Managed Care: Colorado Health Partnerships (CHP) is made up of our Center, together with Colorado West Regional Mental Health Center, Midwestern Mental Health Center, Pikes Peak Mental Health Center, San Luis Valley Mental Health Center, Spanish Peaks Mental Health Center, West Central Mental Health Center, Southeast Mental Health Center and Value Options. CHP holds the State contract for mental health managed care for Medicaid enrollees in our collective regions and constitutes the largest Medicaid managed care region in the State. The Medicaid mental health, managed care contracts in the State were put out for bid last year. The contract was again awarded to CHP. This contract constitutes about 37% of our Center’s business.

New Phone System: At the end of June, Southwest Colorado Mental Health Center implemented a new, internet based phone system across our entire organization. This exciting technology has allowed for total connectivity between all locations. Our offices are now on one network and can be reached by a direct extension or the click of the mouse from our computers. Afterhours, our clients can reach emergency services by pushing a button that will connect them directly with the on-call emergency workers.

This system has also given us the opportunity to increase our availability, mobility and flexibility with our clients, the community and within the work environment. Due to integration with our Microsoft Outlook software, staff can receive their phone calls and voicemails directly on their laptops or have calls forwarded to their cell phones. Phone coverage for offices can also be provided by other location so that staff can facilitate trainings and meetings within their own offices. While we are using a new exchange with this system, our major office and emergency service numbers remain the same.

Linda Lute Absence: Linda Lute is a key member of our staff and a major community resource. She will be on a reduced schedule in early January and unavailable from mid-January to mid-March. After January 14th please contact Pam Wise Romero regarding clinical and service issues at pwise@swcmhc.org, 335-2202 (direct line) or 799-3237 (cell).

A Sad Goodbye...

This past year we lost two committed and passionate advocates for our communities and particularly those with mental illness and/or substance use problems. In April of 2009 **Bill Mashaw** passed away. He had served on our Board of Directors for more than 4 years and led the community effort to establish the Crossroads facility, also known as the Mashaw/Larson Center. Bill will not only be missed by those of us at the Center who knew and loved him, but also by everyone else in the La Plata County communities that knew him.

On September 26, 2009 **Jean Somsen** passed away. Jean was best known as a dedicated foster parent with her husband Gary and as an advocate for animals and the La Plata County Humane Society. Jean served on our Board of Directors for more than 9 years.